

Matthew 7:24-27 (NASB 2020)

The Two Foundations`

²⁴ “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.”

- 1) This is another narrow gate vs. wide gate choice.
 - a) We can choose to hear and do little if anything about following – the easy “wide” path.
 - b) Or we can hear and obey – the harder “narrow” path.
- 2) When we are true followers of Christ, we must not only hear his words, but we must act on them.
 - a) We have to allow His message to make a difference in our lives.
 - b) The key to this parable (as with all parables) is the central message, not the peripheral details.
 - c) In this teaching, Jesus explained that his true followers, by acting on his words, are like a wise man who built his house on rock.
- 3) The one who builds "on rock" is a hearing, responding disciple – not a phony, superficial one like the ones he just said he never knew.
- 4) James tells us basically the same thing:

James 1:22–25 (NASB 2020)

²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just hearers who deceive themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who has looked intently at the perfect law, the *law* of freedom, and has continued *in it*, not having become a forgetful hearer but an active doer, this person will be blessed in what he does.

- a) We have to get our heads and our hearts wrapped around this truth!
 - b) We cannot be like want-a-be athletes who "talk" a great game, but have no skills or abilities.
 - c) Not everyone who talks about heaven belongs to God's kingdom.
 - 5) Jesus is more concerned about our "walk" than our "talk."
 - a) He wants us to do right, not just say the right words.
 - i) If we do this, our house (which represents our life) will withstand the storms.
 - ii) If we do not, then our house will not.
- (1) And, oh by the way, the storms will come!

- b) But, as we were told in the verses just prior to this, the final storm will come at the judgement – will our house stand then?
- 6) Matthew concludes the 3 chapters of the Sermon on the Mount with this statement:

Matthew 7:28-29 (NASB 2020)

²⁸ When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching;
²⁹ for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- a) The question that comes to my mind when I read this is, as these folks walk away from this hill side encounter how many are truly persuaded to change their lives?
 - b) How many are “almost persuaded”?
 - c) The answer can be “truly persuaded to change their lives” – if and only if they have become the radical disciples that Jesus is asking His hearers to be in this entire sermon.
 - d) Jesus concluded his sermon with a challenge about foundations.
 - e) Those who heard him were impressed by his authority.
 - i) But amazement doesn't equal acceptance or submission.
 - f) People who agree in theory that a house should be built on a solid foundation may still go out and construct their lives on a swamp.
- 1) Beginning at this point, I will for the most part be reading from the ESV rather than my old standby NASB2020.
- a) I was Recently approved for using it on my website.
 - b) In many cases the texts are almost identical. However, the ESV is somewhat more readable in a lot of places.

2) Ok. Here we go into Chapter 8 and beyond.

Matthew 8:1–4 (ESV)

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

8 When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. ² And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” ³ And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, **“I will; be clean.”** And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴ And Jesus said to him, **“See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”**

- 3) This is indeed the rest of the story of the Sermon on the Mount.
- 4) As I thought about this, I found it interesting that this situation is a little different than some others we have seen.
- a) In many other instances, the crowd followed Jesus because of what he could do for them – healing, feeding, casting out demons, performing miracles, winning arguments with the Pharisees or Sadducees.
 - b) In this case, as far as we know none of those things had taken place.

- c) The one thing we know for sure is that from vs. 28 of chapter 7, “the crowds were amazed at His teaching.”
- d) So, in this case, perhaps the crowds were following because they really were interested in what he was saying rather than what he could do.
- 5) Having said all that it is obvious from this situation that the crowds are still very much believing in Jesus’ ability to heal as well as teach with authority.
- 6) The incident that now follows has some very interesting things associated with it.
 - a) Leprosy exhibited many symptoms. Obviously different but it is almost like us saying someone has the Flu.
 - b) Without regard to the specific symptom, the person was considered “unclean.”
 - c) They were required to keep a distance from others.
 - i) By Torah law they had to live in isolation “outside the camp.”
 - ii) There, no specific distance between individuals was required.
 - iii) However, when in places where non-lepers were, the Rabbinic interpretation said roughly 6 feet minimum and up to 150 feet in windy conditions.
 - d) In this case, the leprous person approached Jesus and “knelt before him.”
 - i) The word here could mean he actually touched his feet.
 - ii) Even if that was not the case, he was still in a worshipful position before him.
 - iii) The indication here is one of recognizing the person being worshiped as belonging to a superhuman realm.
 - iv) It is beyond simple respect.
 - e) Jesus’ obligation as a good Jew was to keep his distance so he would not be contaminated and become “unclean” himself.
 - f) Instead, in response to the man’s faith and request, Jesus reaches out and touches him and immediately he was cleansed.
 - g) One commentator points out that there is a marked difference between Jesus’ healing and those of Elisha healing Nahman – 7 dippings in the Jordan, and Miriam who had to be isolated for 7 days outside the camp.
 - h) In this case, the cleansing was immediate, as soon as Jesus touched him, he became totally clean.
 - i) Now, when we consider Luke’s account of this in chapter 5 of his gospel, this was spectacular for Luke says he was; “covered with leprosy.”
 - i) Jesus tells the man to go show himself to the priest and make the appropriate offering.
 - i) Michael Green really brings a clarity to the conclusion of the incident when he says speaking of the priest:

‘Go, show yourself to the priest (wouldn’t it have been marvelous to see his face when a healed leprosy sufferer walked in?) and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them’ (4). A testimony to what? To the fact that one greater than Moses had come; to the fact that what Judaism could not do, in cleansing from

leprosy and from the disease of sin that it represented, the fulfiller of Judaism was doing. Here was no intrusion: it was the completion of all that Judaism pointed to. What a frontispiece for the book of miracles!²⁴

- 7) The leper in this situation saw Jesus as superhuman, and as a healer, but above all as someone to be worshiped.

Honest answer, how do we predominately see Jesus?

A Savior

B Friend

C Good ol' boy

D An object of worship as the Son of God

How should we see him?

- 8) We will see another example of perhaps the proper way to think about Jesus in this next passage.

- 1) Moving on then to the next healing ...

Matthew 8:5–4 (ESV)

The Faith of a Centurion

⁵ When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” ⁷ And he said to him, **“I will come and heal him.”** ⁸ But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.” ¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, **“Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”** ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, **“Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.”** And the servant was healed at that very moment.

- 2) Do any of you have the word “child” instead of “servant” in vs. 6?
- a) That’s another of those words that have some strange multiple meanings.
 - b) It is interesting the twist that the writers put on that in the Chosen.
 - i) In that case, the child was the illegitimate son of the centurion by his slave but he considered him as and loved him as his son.
- 3) We need to get a picture of this situation.

²⁴ Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven*, The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 115.

- a) Where Jesus is, what the place was like, and what the people were like.
- b) Once we get that we will better see the significance of this incident and the next.
- c) First, back in chapter 4, we find that Jesus is now living in Capernaum.

Matthew 4:12–13 (ESV)

¹² Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. ¹³ And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled ...

- d) Of course, it goes on to quote the prophecies from Isaiah.
- e) From chapter 4, we also find that we have in all likelihood 4 of his current disciples living there.
 - i) Simon Peter
 - ii) Andrew (Peter's brother)
 - iii) James (son of Zebedee)
 - iv) John (James' brother, son of Zebedee)
 - v) Matthew, the tax collector, was soon to become a disciple.
 - vi) In fact, at this point, it is likely that these are all the disciples save perhaps one or two others like Philip or Nathanael, but certainly not the full twelve.
- f) Capernaum was not under direct Roman Control at that time.
 - i) It only comes under full control in 44 CE.
- g) It was however a place where Roman soldiers were stationed and as such it had a large amount of pagan influence.
 - i) In other words, not a place where you would want to go and settle down to raise your family.
 - ii) Capernaum was probably like Odessa. Midland/Odessa ... quote.
 - iii) This was a place of challenge for Jesus and his disciples as they approached the Jewish community.
- h) And then, there is this centurion.
 - i) He obviously knows about Jesus, he knows his ability to heal, but most importantly, he, like the leper sees him as a man of God.
 - ii) Not just a rabbi but someone beyond the average human being.

The centurion asked Jesus for help, not for himself but for someone else. **He crossed racial, social, and political barriers to present his servant's plight.** But he didn't tell Jesus what he wanted. He simply described his servant's condition: paralyzed and in excruciating pain. He allowed Jesus to decide if and how he would help. The centurion practiced wisdom in what he did and what he didn't do.²⁵

- iii) Some commentators further believe that he may be one of the "God fearers."

²⁵ Bruce B. Barton, Matthew, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996), 151.

- iv) These are the folks who have a knowledge and even a belief in God but have come short of becoming fully proselyted – circumcised and following the Jewish Torah etc.
- v) Luke even tells in chapter 7 of his gospel that he built their synagogue:

Luke 7:4–5 (ESV)

⁴And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, “He is worthy to have you do this for him, ⁵for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue.”